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CIA 2.04.2 Students (foreign)

Students Opposing U.S.-Aided Regimes Got C.I.A. Subsidies

By STEVEN V. ROBERTS

Former officials of the National Student Association said yesterday that the Central Intelligence Agency had helped subsidize students who had been exiled from their homelands for fighting colonial regimes supported by official United States policy.

The students, who did not know they were receiving C.I.A. funds, included refugees from Algeria, Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, South-West Africa and Rhodesia, the former officials said.

The C.I.A. funds were used to finance scholarships, travel and other expenses for student exiles in the United States and Europe, the officials said.

Present leaders of the association have acknowledged using C.I.A. funds to provide scholarships for Algerians, but the other links had not previously been disclosed.

'Real Tragedy' Is Cited

The former officials, who directed the association's international program at various periods between 1955 and 1962, maintained that the C.I.A. had not influenced the association's policies toward the exiled students.

In some cases the former officials said they themselves did not know the precise source of the funds and had only learned of their origin when Ramparts magazine disclosed last week that the association has been receiving money from the C.I.A. since 1952.

"The real tragedy of the disclosure that the N.S.A. took C.I.A. money is that we were doing things we would have

done anyway if we had other sources of funds," said a former international affairs vice president who now teaches government. "But no one else was interested in helping these students."

The former officials noted that since the United States Government had strong ties to France, Portugal, South Africa, and other regimes opposed by the exiles, the Department of State was powerless to offer assistance.

"Private foundations wouldn't touch a thing like this," one former student officer observed.

The money, the officials said, was usually transferred to the association from a foundation used as a cover by the C.I.A. and then given to the exiles.

Occasionally the exiles had direct dealings with the cover foundations, including the Foundation for Youth and Student Affairs, identified by present student leaders as a major conduit for C.I.A. funds.

The amount of money given to the refugees since the mid-nineteen-fifties is impossible to determine, the former officials said.

The bulk of the funds were used in the United States. In addition to the scholarships provided for about 20 Algerians a year from 1958 to 1962, some scholarships were obtained for students from Angola, Mozambique and South Africa.

The latter were all white youths who opposed the policies of apartheid.

Aid Vital for Students

Many of the students had left their countries without money or credentials, the former officials noted, and they would have found it impossible to enter or pay for college without the association's help.

The association also used C.I.A. funds to enable the Algerians and Portuguese Africans—scattered throughout the country—to meet several times a year and discuss mutual problems. The two groups—each with about 20 students in any year—were the largest national contingents in this country.

The former officers said that money was also provided to send several representatives of the two groups to international meetings of student exiles in Europe.

C.I.A. funds also helped finance the international meetings of the exile groups, the former officials said.

In addition, the money was used to care for the personal needs of individual students in the United States. Many of these had fled "with nothing but the clothes on their backs," said one former official, who had been a vice president for international affairs in the early nineteen-sixties.

On one occasion, he recalled, a leader of the Algerian union of students escaped from prison in France and was suffering from severe ear and skin infections. The association brought him to the United States and provided needed medical care for the leader.

The former officials said that most Algerian students returned to their homeland after independence in 1962 and many took top jobs in their government.

The other students remained in exile, here and in Europe. Several South Africans are teaching in Canada because the United States would not let them stay after their passports expired, the former student leaders said.

"Looking back on it I suppose we did the wrong thing," said one former officer. "The international program has been severely hurt. But it was a choice between using C.I.A. funds or not having a program."